

REMARKS

The Office rejected the present claims as obvious in view of publications to Yagi (U.S. 2003/0138717), Emoto (U.S. 2003/0152859) and Iida (U.S. 2002/0146258).

Applicants note that each of the Yagi and Emoto applications and the present application, were commonly owned by Ricoh Company Ltd. of Tokyo, Japan, at the time the presently claimed invention was made.

Applicants submitted a certified English translation of the priority document (i.e., JP 2002/363067) in the present application on April 11, 2006. Applicants thus perfected their priority date and disqualified the Yagi and Emoto publications as prior art under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a). Applicants have further disqualified Yagi and Emoto as prior art under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. § 103(c).

Applicants thus submit that the rejections of the present claims as obvious in view of Yagi, Emoto and Iida should be withdrawn.

For the reasons discussed above, Applicants request withdrawal of the rejection and the passage of all now-pending claims to issue.

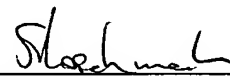
Respectfully submitted,

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